

The following "Listing of Claims" replaces all prior versions and "Listings of Claims" in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for managing a plurality of participants to an event comprising:

~~a director having an address associated therewith for delivering the event to the plurality of participants;~~

a plurality of participant managers devices installed within a network communication system and logically connected in a hierarchy amongst themselves and between to said a director device and a plurality of participant devices, thereby forming a hierarchy, the director forming a root of the hierarchy, the participant managers forming branches of the hierarchy, and the participants forming leaves of the hierarchy, wherein each of the participant manager devices is assigned a level within the hierarchy, and wherein each of the participant manager devices is configured to automatically determine its position within the hierarchy when entering the hierarchy by performing the following:

transmitting an announce message to other participant manager devices in the hierarchy;

identifying a current upstream participant manager device as being one level higher than the entering participant manager computing device;

iteratively comparing hierarchy levels of participant manager devices responding to the announce message to identify responding participant manager devices having a hierarchy level between the current upstream participant manager device and the entering participant manager device; and

in response to identifying a responding participant manager device having a hierarchy level between the current upstream participant manager device and the entering participant manager device, transmitting an attach message to the responding participant manager device having a hierarchy level between the current upstream participant manager device and the entering participant manager device.

-, and

~~———— a turnstile installed at and associated with each of the plurality of participants, each turnstile logically connected to one of said plurality of participant managers in said hierarchy based on an association between the turnstile and one or more characteristics of the network communication system, wherein the turnstile is configured to perform a first authentication on a ticket for the event received by the associated participant to locally determine whether the ticket is a valid ticket, and~~

~~wherein the participant manager logically connected to the turnstile is further configured to perform a second authentication to determine whether the valid ticket is authentic.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a participant device, wherein ~~said turnstile sends~~ the participant device is configured to send delivery statistics regarding said an associated participant to said a connected participant manager device; and

wherein said plurality of participant ~~managers~~ manager devices propagates said delivery statistics upstream through said hierarchy to said director device.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 2, wherein each of said plurality of participant managers ~~manager devices~~ is configured to aggregate ~~aggregates~~ said delivery statistics from those of said plurality of participants beneath it in said hierarchy.

4-5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a participant device, wherein the participant device is configured to:

receive an electronic ticket from a participant;

perform a first authentication on the ticket; and

if the ticket passes the first authentication, forwards ~~said turnstile forwards~~ the valid ticket to said a corresponding connected participant manager device for authentication.

7. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 6, wherein said connected participant manager device is configured to communicate ~~communicates~~ authorization to ~~said turnstile~~ the participant device that forwarded the ticket, upon determining said ~~valid~~ ticket is authentic.

8-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a participant device configured to prevent an ~~wherein said turnstile prevents said associated~~ participant from receiving ~~the~~ an event until ~~the~~ a ticket associated with the event is determined to have been provided to said associated participant.

11-46. (Canceled)

47. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ a ticket associated with ~~the~~ an event includes first authentication information and second authentication information, wherein the first authentication information is used by the turnstile to locally determine whether the ticket is a valid ticket, and the second authentication information is used by the connected participant manager to determine whether the valid ticket is authentic.

48-49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a director device, wherein the director device is a server configured to allocate a fixed number of tickets to ~~the~~ an event.

51. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a director device, wherein the director device is a server configured to allocate a fixed number of tickets to content providers.

52. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 50, wherein the director server is configured to allocate the fixed number of tickets among the plurality of participant ~~managers~~manager devices.

53. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein the participant manager devices are further configured to:

in response to identifying a responding participant manager device having a same hierarchy level as the current upstream participant manager device, determining whether to update the identified current upstream participant manager device by comparing a distance between the entering participant manager device and responding participant manager device having the same hierarchy level as the current upstream participant manager device, with a distance between the current upstream participant manager device and the entering participant manager device.

54. (New) The system of claim 53, wherein the distances between devices are based on a number of hops needed for communications between the devices.

55. (New) A method of adding a new device to a device hierarchy, comprising:

adding a new participant manager device to a communication network having a plurality of participant manager devices arranged in a hierarchy, wherein the new participant manager device is assigned a level in the hierarchy;

transmitting, from the new participant manager device, an announcement message to the plurality of participant manager devices;

iteratively comparing, for responses received at the new participant manager device from responding participant manager devices, a hierarchy level of the responding device with a hierarchy level of a current next-step-upstream participant manager device; and

in response to determining that the responding device has a level in between the

level of the current next-step-upstream device and the new participant manager device, transmitting an attachment message from the new participant manager device to the responding device, and storing information identifying the responding device as the new current next-step-upstream participant manager device.

56. (New) The method of claim 55, further comprising:
the new participant manager device being managed by the current next-step-upstream participant manager device.

57. (New) The method of claim 55, further comprising:
in response to determining that a responding device has a level equal to a level of the current next-step-upstream device, using a distance comparison to determine which of the two equal-level devices should be the managing device for the new participant manager device.

58. (New) The method of claim 57, wherein the distance comparison further comprises determining which of the devices being compared is closest to the new participant manager device within a communication network.

59. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the distance is based on a number of hops needed for two devices to communicate with one another within the communication network.